Pest Update (July 28, 2010)

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Note: samples containing living tissue may only be accepted from South Dakota. Please do not send samples of dying plants or insect from other states. If you live outside of South Dakota and have a question, please send a digital picture of the pest or problem instead. **Walnut samples may not be sent in from any location – please provide a picture instead**.

Available on the net at:
http://sdda.sd.gov/Forestry/Educational-Information/PestAlert-Archives.aspx

In this issue **pg**

Plant development for the growing season

The Amur maackias have already set seed, many years they are just blooming now so we are clearly ahead in plant development for the year.

Current concerns

The last week of storms has left a tremendous amount of tree damage in its wake. The saturated soils resulted in a large number of uprooted trees. There have been a large number of calls from homeowners about whether their uprooted trees can be stood back up. Generally speaking this is not practical. The amount of roots snapped off as the tree falls will reduce the stability of the tree once it is righted and while this can be mitigated through guying, the cost and liability associated with the guying may be higher than most are willing to accept. In addition, extensive root loss will limit water uptake and increase moisture stress, perhaps for many years to come. Eventually the tree may die anyway from the stress of losing roots and it might be far better to "cut" the losses now rather than spend time and money and still remove the tree a few years from now.

A reminder to all those homeowners who are attempting to do their own storm clean-up is that tree work is among the highest risk activities and working with down and broken trees increases the hazards and the potential for a serious accident to the amateur tree worker. Homeowners are often injured and occasionally killed while engaging in such activity as they do not realize the force contained in a bent tree until the spring pole is released and the branch and saw snaps back on them. Homeowners often are not wearing the proper personal protective equipment such as heavy boots, cut-resistant chaps, gloves, hard hat, and eye and ear protection when operating a chain saw and these omissions results in thousands of preventable saw injuries. Storm clean-up is best left to professional tree workers. However, just because someone has a pick-up and a chain saw does not make them a professional tree worker. Homeowners should check to be certain the company has the proper insurance, not just auto insurance but liability and worker's compensation insurance

otherwise the homeowner may find that they become financially responsible for any injuries to the workers or damage to property, not the company!

Jerry, our horticulture educator in Brown County, reported that the oak lace bug (*Corythucha arcuata*) is causing some leaf discoloration of bur oak in the northeast. Jerry sent some of the insects to me and Aaron, the Aberdeen city forester, sent in some leaves with the typical stippling injury caused by this insect. Lace bugs, both the nymphs and adults, feed by sucking sap from the foliage leaving small stipples in the leaf surface. The lower surface of these discolored leaves will often be covered with small powered-like dust, the frass or excrement from the insects. At this time of year most of the damage is done and treatments are probably not warranted. Insecticides containing carbaryl or malathion may be used for control. These should be applied in late spring just after the eggs have hatched and the nymphs begin feeding on the leaves.

E-samples

I received a great picture from Craig, a Department of Agriculture forester, of a very heavy scale infestation on an ash. This seems to be the year for scale problem as I have received numerous samples and calls on a large variety of scale insect. The scale in the picture is commonly referred to as lecanium scale, not really a specific scale but a term for four separate genera of scales that are nearly impossible to distinguish from one another. Fortunately, despite their differences they all have similar life cycles and the control is identical. Since these are soft scales, honeydew producers, many of the insecticides that are applied as a soil drench around the base of the tree are effective and these should be applied in early spring.

Craig also provided this picture of what appears to be bacterial blight on Amur maple. While this cannot be confirmed without testing here, the disease has been mentioned in a number of recent *Updates* associated with lilacs, particularly Japanese tree lilac. The disease, caused by *Pseudomonas syringae*, has also been found in Amur maples in South Dakota and is occasionally reported in

windbreaks. The most common symptom is blackening leaves and shoot tips, sometimes resembling what would be expected on an apple infected with fireblight. It also looks like frost damage and this is due to the ice nucleation ability of the bacteria, essentially allowing the formation of ice crystals in plant tissue and increasing frost injury. The control of the disease on maples is the same as for lilacs; removal of infected shoots.

Samples received

Brown County **What is wrong with this catalpa? The leaves are covered in blotches.**

Catalpas are usually not troubled by leaf diseases, but considering the weather it is not too surprising we are seeing some show up. The disease is alternaria blight but this is generally confined to leaves that are already injured, though with the almost continual rains much of the state has experienced leaf disease such as these are more common this year. I have also seen blotches occur as one of the very first symptoms of verticillium wilt on catalpa. If these leaves begin to wilt, particularly if the wilting is restricted to specific branches, you may be looking at wilt begin the primary stress agent rather than a foliage disease

Brown County **What is this woolly mass on the bur oak leaf?**

This is the woolly oak gall, formed by a very small cynipid wasp. The name woolly oak gall is a generic term that describes the gall, rather than the insect that causes it as there are cynipid wasps in three different genera *Andricus*, *Callirphytis* and *Macrodiplosis* that create similar “woolly” appearing galls. The gall wasps also have a characteristic known as heterogamy, meaning there is an alternation between generations and these differences also relate to the galls they each form. One generation will form these globular “fuzzy” galls, the next will form numerous small hardened bumps on the upper leaf surface (with a indentation on the lower side) that often look more like a disease then a gall.

Clark County **The needles are turning yellow and curling at the tips of this spruce.**

This may be herbicide, though based on the sample I cannot tell you which one might be responsible for the symptoms. I am leaning towards herbicide as there are no signs of a pathogen, insect or mite on or in the sample and the symptoms, particularly the curling at the tips, are consistent with herbicide injury. If these symptoms are occurring on a number of the spruce, I suspect this is the problem. I would need more information and samples to determine which herbicide may be responsible for this damage. The bud set on the samples was very poor as well and these trees may not produce their normal growth next year.

Douglas County **What might be wrong with this dwarf Alberta spruce?**

This is mostly spruce spider mite injury. This dwarf conifer typically has very dense branching, ideal conditions for spider mite development. Spider mites have not been a major source for samples this year, the continual wet weather may have limited their activity, but I still see it on this spruce cultivar. The injury is caused by the feeding in the spring, though the symptoms usually do not appear until now. There are very few good controls for spider mites available to homeowners, probably horticultural oil this fall, about the time silver maples leaves begin to color, is the best. Dwarf Alberta spruce also have a very shallow and sparse root system and any changes to the soil, even too wet, will also result in thinning of the canopy and I suspect some of the symptoms are due to the soil environment as well and there is not much that can be done about that. Dwarf Alberta spruce are attractive plants in the garden center but rarely do well in the landscape, at least long-term.

Sully County **Please identify these berries and can they be safety eaten?**

This is the silver buffaloberry (*Shepherdia argenta*) and the small red fruit that lines the silvery branches right now is edible. You will not find a lot of critters eating them at this time of year since the fruit is so sour, usually it takes a frost or two to make it edible. The fruit is used for jellies. I tasted it once, which was enough.